

## Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T STATE 207760

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 391 - AUGUST 30, 1977

MOSCOW, KUWAIT, SANA FOR AMBASSADORS

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. ME PEACE. EMBASSY DAMASCUS OBSERVED THAT FURTHER  
EDITORIALS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE US HAVE APPEARED  
DAILY IN THE SYRIAN PRESS IN RECENT DAYS. THIS PRESS  
CAMPAIGN--AMONG THE MOST CRITICAL ATTACKS ON US POLICY  
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SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER ASSUMED OFFICE--AT BEST QUESTIONS  
THAT THE US WILL TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTIONS TOWARD  
PEACE AND AT WORST ASSERTS THAT US PEACE SCHEMES INVOLVE  
GIVING ISRAEL EVERYTHING IT WANTS.

2. MEANWHILE, SYRIAN INFORMATION MINISTER ISKANDAR, IN AN  
INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE BEIRUT MAGAZINE MONDAY MORNING,

PAINTED A GLOOMY PICTURE OF THE PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE AND BY IMPLICATION CALLED UPON THE ARABS TO GO TO WAR WITH ISRAEL IF CURRENT EFFORTS FAIL. HE COMMENTED THAT "WE DO NOT THINK THERE IS ONE GLIMMER OF HOPE THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WILL CONVENE." ISKANDAR HINTED THAT SYRIA WOULD WELCOME TALKS BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AND PRESIDENT CARTER BUT RULED OUT A KHADDAM-DAYAN MEETING AND REITERATED SYRIAN OPPOSITION TO A "WORKING GROUP" OF ARAB AND ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTERS.

3. CAIRO'S AL-AHRAM PLAYED UP ANOTHER ARAB ISRAELI ISSUE IN ITS REPORT THAT EGYPT WILL URGE THE ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE, SCHEDULED TO MEET IN CAIRO SEPTEMBER 3, TO DEVISE A UNIFIED PLAN OPPOSING RECENT ISRAELI SETTLEMENT MOVES ON THE WEST BANK. THE PAPER ALSO ADDED THAT DETAILS OF CONTACTS BY EGYPT, SYRIA, AND SAUDI ARABIA WITH THE US AND THE PLO WOULD BE REVIEWED TO HELP FORMULATE AN ARAB PLAN PRIOR TO THE UPCOMING UNGA SESSION. EMBASSY CAIRO COMMENTED THAT, JUDGING FROM RECENT EGYPTIAN PRESS COVERAGE, THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE PREPARING THE PUBLIC FOR A SHIFT IN FOCUS FROM THE US ROLE TO THE COURT OF WORLD OPINION FOR THE COMING PHASE OF THE PEACE PROCESS.

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4. THE SOVIET POSITION WAS GIVEN MORE EMPHASIS DURING RECENT CONTACTS WITH US OFFICIALS VISITING IN MOSCOW. SPEAKING WITH SENATOR MCGOVERN ON AUGUST 26 FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO STATED THAT HE WAS "NOT TOO OPTIMISTIC" REGARDING THE PRESENT MIDEAST SITUATION, BUT FELT THAT A US-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE WOULD PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM. HE BLAMED HIS PESSIMISM MAINLY ON US POLICY, WHICH HE TERMED EITHER UNCLEAR OR ONE-SIDED, AND INSISTED THAT THE US CONTINUES TO SUPPORT ISRAEL'S "EXTREMIST DEMANDS" AND SEEMS UNWILLING TO PRESSURE BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT.

5. REGARDING MOSCOW'S POSITION, GROMYKO ASSERTED THAT A SETTLEMENT REQUIRES A SMALL, INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, WITH THREATS TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY "EXCLUDED BY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT." HE ALSO REITERATED SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO SUBSCRIBE TO SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL, ADDING THAT RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL WAS "ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE" AT PRESENT SINCE ISRAEL HAS MADE NO POSITIVE STEPS TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT.

6. IN AN INTERESTING NOTE, GROMYKO ALSO ASKED WHETHER THE US WOULD BE PREPARED TO INTERPRET RESOLUTION 242 IN SOME WAY THAT WOULD MEET PALESTINIAN CONCERNS. (ARAFAT ARRIVED YESTERDAY IN MOSCOW AND IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TALKS WITH GROMYKO.) (CONFIDENTIAL)

7. LIBYA. WEEKEND TALKS AT SOLLUM BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND LIBYAN MILITARY AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS RESULTED IN LITTLE MORE THAN AN AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE THEIR DISCUSSIONS AND THE PROPAGANDA HALT. A LIBYAN MILITARY OFFICIAL, MAJOR YUNIS, RETURNED TO CAIRO WITH THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION TO FOLLOW UP THE CONTACTS.

8. LIBYA CONTINUES TO PLAN AGAINST AN EGYPTIAN ATTACK,  
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HOWEVER. PREPAREDNESS REMAINS HIGH AND RESERVISTS CONTINUE TO BE CALLED UP. ONLY SMALL NUMBERS OF PERSONNEL ARE BEING GIVEN LEAVE DURING RAMADAN. THE ARMED FORCES CHIEF RECEIVED WIDE PRESS COVERAGE DURING A RECENT VISIT TO ARMY AND AIR FORCE UNITS IN THE BORDER AREA. COL. QADHAFI AND OTHER LIBYAN OFFICIALS APPARENTLY EMPHASIZED CAIRO SALLEGED INTENTION TO RENEW THE FIGHTING DURING TALKS WITH UN SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM IN TRIPOLI ON 23 AND 24 AUGUST.

9. THESE CONTINUING MILITARY AND PROPAGANDA EFFORTS PROBABLY REFLECT A GENUINE CONCERN OVER SADAT'S INTENTIONS. THEY EVIDENTLY ARE INTENDED TO MAINTAIN MAXIMUM MILITARY STRENGTH AND PUBLIC SUPPORT IN CASE OF ATTACK AND TO ENSURE THAT EGYPT'S SUPPOSED HOSTILE INTENTION IS ADVERTISED WELL IN ADVANCE SHOULD FIGHTING RESUME.

10. LIBYAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY HAS ALSO INCREASED, RESULTING IN IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA AND ALGERIA. IN ADDITION, RELATIONS WITH JORDAN AND TALKS WITH SUDAN ARE PENDING RESUMPTION, AND OVERTURES ARE BEING MADE TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THE DIPLOMATIC EFFORT IS LIKELY AIMED AT FINDING NEW OR INCREASED RESOURCES FOR MAINTAINING ECONOMIC PROGRESS, MAINLY TO REPLACE LOST EGYPTIAN LABORERS AND TECHNICIANS, AND AT ENSURING A NEUTRAL--IF NOT PRO-LIBYAN--STANCE AMONG A GREATER NUMBER OF STATES SHOULD FIGHTING RESUME.

11. MEANWHILE, ON AUGUST 24 THE TWO SIDES EXCHANGED PRISONERS TAKEN DURING THE JULY FIGHTING. THE EGYPTIANS REPORTEDLY TURNED SOME 30 PERSONS OVER TO THE LIBYANS, AND TRIPOLI REPATRIATED APPROXIMATELY 40 EGYPTIANS. ALTHOUGH THE ANIMOSITY BETWEEN QADHAFI AND SADAT HAS  
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NOT ABATED, NEITHER APPEARS TO HAVE MUCH TO GAIN

NOW BY RENEWING THE FIGHTING. BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC DIS-  
LOCATIONS, QADHAFI IS PROBABLY NOT ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE  
CURRENT EXTENT OF MOBILIZATION FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD.  
ON THE OTHER HAND, CAIRO, BARRING SERIOUS PROBLEMS ON  
THE ISRAELI FRONT, CAN MAINTAIN ITS LARGE FORCES AGAINST  
LIBYA ALMOST INDEFINITELY. THUS, EFFORTS TO EXTEND AND  
FORMALIZE THE TRUCE ON THE BORDER APPEAR TO BE MORE  
IN QADHAFI'S INTERESTS AND LIKELY WILL CONTINUE.

(SECRET/NOFORN) CHRISTOPHER

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